

Academic Policies

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NOTE: Refer to the Avondale website for full versions of the policies summarised here and for additional policies not located in this handbook.

This section on Academic Policies is for use in relation to postgraduate coursework degrees and postgraduate research degrees. Some academic policies that refer to postgraduate research degrees only are located in the section on Research Higher Degrees.

Academic Integrity Policy

Avondale's Code of Conduct states that it is an educational aim of Avondale to develop skilled graduates who act according to ethical principles and with integrity in their personal and professional lives. In preparing students to meet this aim, Avondale expects students to act with integrity in the performance of their academic work while students at Avondale. Avondale assists students in this respect by informing them how to act with integrity and discouraging all forms of academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty may take several forms and these forms include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating in examinations, falsification of data, and incorrectly ascribing authorship in group projects.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the use of someone else's ideas or words as if they were your own. Plagiarism is one form of academic dishonesty, and students are expected to avoid it by: doing their own work when independent work is required; acknowledging all sources of information and ideas; and acknowledging all group members when group assignments are required. Further, students should refrain from: copying another student's work; lending an assignment to other students; copying or quoting from another source without acknowledging that source and appropriately identifying all quoted material; and paraphrasing another person's work closely, with minor changes, but with the essential meaning, form and/or progression of ideas maintained, without acknowledging the source of the paraphrase. (Extensive paraphrasing, even when acknowledged, is not advisable.)

Students are required to declare that the work is their own by attaching a cover sheet to all assignments submitted. The cover sheet should include the following declaration:

I certify that this assignment is my own work and is free from plagiarism. I understand that the assignment may be checked for plagiarism by electronic or other means. The assignment has not previously been submitted for assessment in any other unit or institution. I have read and understood Avondale's Academic Integrity Policy.

Signed

Date

Lecturers undertake plagiarism prevention procedures in order to assist students to complete the required assessment tasks without pressure to plagiarise. These plagiarism prevention procedures include: rotating assessment tasks in subsequent teaching periods to prevent students using the work of previous students in the unit; coordinating the due dates of assignments so that assignment due dates are spread as evenly as possible throughout the teaching period; providing clear assignment instructions and the conditions under which assignments may be completed (e.g., with/

without the use of calculators); refusing to mark assignments that do not have a properly signed cover sheet; and providing adequate feedback on all formative assessment work.

However, if a lecturer suspects plagiarism, (in the case of postgraduate coursework degrees) the lecturer will, in collaboration with the Chair of the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee, or the Faculty Research Committee (in the case of postgraduate research degrees) determine the appropriate penalty. Guidelines for this process are outlined below:

Major Plagiarism

Major plagiarism is defined as an attempt to circumvent assessment requirements by drawing on unacknowledged sources in such a way as to improve the grade. This is serious misconduct and will not be tolerated. Guidelines for responding to instances of major plagiarism are as follows:

The lecturer who suspects or has evidence of major plagiarism reports their suspicions and/or provides evidence to the Chair of the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee who in turn notifies the Faculty Dean and the Course Convenor of the allegation and that an investigation will follow. The Chair of the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee or the Faculty Research Committee checks the student's file in the Academic Office for earlier recorded instances of plagiarism. Where previous breaches are on file, these will be taken into consideration in the investigation.

The Chair of the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee or the Faculty Research Committee sets up a meeting between the student(s), the lecturer and the Chair of the relevant Committee. Where two or more students are involved both/all student(s) are interviewed simultaneously. The Chair of the relevant Committee acts as facilitator of the meeting. The lecturer outlines his/her cause for concern and explains the basis for his/her concerns. The Chair asks the student(s) for an explanation. If plagiarism is established the Chair takes a penalty recommendation to the Committee. Students in their second or later teaching periods will be penalised more heavily than beginning students. The penalties for more serious instances are as follows:

- **First offence:** Penalties range from substantial deduction of marks to zero marks for an assignment.
- **Second offence** (counting all units taken at Avondale): fail grade for the unit.
- **Third offence** (counting all units taken at Avondale): fail grade for the unit and the student shall be asked to show cause why they should not be excluded from their course of study for a period of 2 years. Any student excluded from one course of study will not be permitted to transfer any internal advanced standing to another course of study.

If major plagiarism is established the Chair of the relevant Committee reports the matter to the Registrar who will ensure that a record is placed in the student's file in the

Academic Office. This record will include the date, the unit involved, the nature and extent of the plagiarism, and the action taken. Copies of the relevant documents also should be included in the file.

Minor Plagiarism

Minor plagiarism is defined as uninformed omissions of details which are minor in nature and by themselves are unlikely to alter the student's overall grade (e.g., omission of a limited number of referencing details or incorrect referencing details.) It is acknowledged that these minor omissions and errors are more likely to occur in the student's first teaching period on campus, and therefore, responses should be more educative at that time. Education and rehabilitation are the preferred course of action.

However, major plagiarism may occur in a student's first teaching period and in such cases the Chair of the Committee should use the guidelines for resolving major plagiarism as outlined above in resolving the matter. In addition, not all instances of minor plagiarism occur in the first teaching period. Where instances of minor plagiarism occur in subsequent teaching periods the Chair should use the guidelines for resolving minor instances of plagiarism in resolving these cases.

Guidelines for resolving minor instances of plagiarism are that, in the first instance, a student is to be issued with a warning and a note filed on the academic file. Subsequent instances of minor plagiarism will be penalised with increasing severity as determined by the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee or the Faculty Research Committee.

In all cases of plagiarism a record will be kept on the student's academic file and this record will include a copy of the plagiarised work, the findings of any investigation, and a record of the actions taken.

Advanced Standing and Credit Transfer

Students may apply for advanced standing in postgraduate courses where they have completed formal studies at another higher education institution. Students apply by submitting to the Course Convenor the application for advanced standing form and an original copy of any relevant Statement of Academic Record (Transcript) as documentary evidence of satisfactory completion of that course or courses. A decision is made by the relevant Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee or the Avondale Research Committee in the case of research higher degrees about the level at which the student will enter the course (e.g., one year of advanced standing means the student will enter the course at the level of Year 2). The maximum amount of credit that may be granted normally is no greater than 50% of the course. .

Block or Unspecified Credit

Students may apply for unspecified or block credit in postgraduate courses where they have completed a block of units that comprise part of a course at a recognised higher education institution. Students apply by submitting to the Course Convenor the application for advanced standing form and an original copy of any relevant Statement of Academic Record (Transcript) as documentary evidence of satisfactory completion of those units. .

Credit Transfer in Units

Students may apply for credit transfer in postgraduate courses where they have completed a unit or units at a recognised higher education institution. Where the study has been completed external to Avondale students apply by submitting to the Course Convenor the application for advanced standing form and an original copy of any relevant Statement of Academic Record (Transcript) as documentary evidence of satisfactory completion of a similar unit(s) as well as additional documentary evidence to indicate the content covered in the unit. Where the study has been undertaken in a different course at Avondale, the Course Convenor and lecturer approve any units which can be transferred to the course in which the student subsequently enrolls.

Waiver/Exemption

Students may apply for an exemption from a required element of a course on the basis of units or equivalent content completed elsewhere, but the student may be required to undertake alternative unit(s) to an equivalent credit point value in lieu of the exempted unit(s).

Credit by Challenge Assessment

Incoming students in postgraduate coursework degrees may submit to the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee an application to demonstrate that they have achieved the learning outcomes of a particular unit through prior learning. The Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee may permit the applicant to demonstrate their prior learning through submitting a summative assessment item normally in the form of an examination. In such cases, the Faculty Dean shall be satisfied that the summative assessment item is set and assessed at the same level as that expected of other students in the unit. The student must achieve at least a passing grade.

Upon successful completion of the challenge assessment, the student must submit a request for credit transfer for the relevant unit, providing documentary evidence of the successful completion of the challenge assessment.

Partial Credit

Students in postgraduate coursework degrees may seek partial credit from assessment within a unit by applying to the lecturer in charge of the particular unit. If satisfactory documentary evidence is presented by the student, the lecturer may exempt the student from the particular part of the assessment or attendance requirements that is related to the previously completed material.

Credit Transfer through Cross Institutional Enrolment

Avondale students should seek the permission of their Course Convenor prior to enrolling in studies with another institution that they will later seek to credit toward their Avondale course.

Upon successful completion of the units at the other institution, it is the student's responsibility to submit an application for credit transfer to the Course Convenor and attach an original copy of the official Statement of Academic Record (Transcript) from the other institution. This documentation must be received no later than the published deadline for grade upload for prospective graduates prior to the student's graduation, and earlier if possible.

Appeals on Academic Matters Policy

Academic matters include, but are not limited to, matters relating to student progress, assessment, review of a grade, transfer credit or advanced standing, quality assurance and eligibility for graduation, curriculum and awards in a course of study. Policies for each of these academic matters appear in both the student section and academic section of the Avondale Policy Manual, the definitive version of which is located on the Avondale website.

Students at Avondale have access to a 4-stage academic grievance process which is set out below. The grievance and appeals process will be conducted at no cost to the student or the person who seeks redress in this manner.

- 1 (a) The student (or nominee) initiates the grievance process by discussing orally the nature of the grievance with the person with whom the grievance is held.
- (b) If the oral response does not satisfy the student he/she may either speak with the Course Convenor or submit a written description of the grievance to the Dean of the Faculty who will endeavour to resolve the issue amicably and with respect to the rights and responsibilities of both parties. If the matter is able to be resolved, the Course Convenor or Dean of the Faculty will report the outcome to the student. If the student feels unwilling or unable to approach either the person with whom the grievance is held or the Dean of the Faculty, the student may seek the support of, or seek to be represented by, another person such as a family member, friend, counsellor or other professional support person, the Director of Student Services, a representative of the Avondale Student Association Council, the Equity Officer, the Disabilities Officer, the Student Counsellor, or the Chaplain.
- (c) If the Dean of the Faculty is unable to resolve the matter informally, he/she will establish a meeting within 10 working days between the student, the

person with whom the grievance is held and any other relevant authorities or persons.

- 2 (a) If the matter remains unresolved then the student should submit a written grievance with full supporting documentation to the Vice-President (Learning and Teaching). The Vice President (Learning and Teaching) (or nominee) will within 10 working days interview all parties individually, and set up a meeting between all parties where arguments and/or witnesses in support of either party can be presented.
- (b) The Vice President (Learning and Teaching), in consultation with a sub-committee (comprising no more than 4 persons) of the Learning and Teaching Committee will make a final determination on the matter within 10 working days of receiving the written submission, and communicate the outcome to all parties. In communicating this outcome the Vice President (Learning and Teaching) will give reasons and full explanation in writing for the decision and actions taken as part of the procedures, if requested, by the complainant and/or respondent.
- 3 (a) If the student is dissatisfied with the decision of the Vice-President (Learning and Teaching) in Stage 2, the student may apply in writing to the Review Officer who is the President of Avondale and who also is a member of the Avondale Council, provided that the Avondale President has not been involved in the preceding process. The Avondale President may delegate this function to another person provided that the other person holds a rank that is more senior than any person previously involved in the process (such as the Education Director of the South Pacific Division of SDAs who is also a member of the Avondale Council) and provided that that person has not already been involved in the preceding review process.

Students who request a review of the decision of the Vice-President (Learning and Teaching) must follow the following process:

Write a letter to the President of Avondale and lodge it with the President's Personal Assistant within 28 days after the day on which the student/applicant received the notice of the outcome of the initial grievance/appeal application.

- (b) In reviewing grievance and appeals decisions the Office of the President will provide written acknowledgement within five working days of the receipt of the application for review of a reviewable decision. This letter of receipt of the application for review will include the statement, "*A final determination will be made within 45 days.*"
- (c) If after 45 days the student has not received a letter advising him/her of the outcome of the review of the decision, the student is advised to call the Office

of the President for information regarding the date on which the final determination was mailed. If the student is unable to obtain information about the outcome of the final decision the student must assume that the original decision remains unaltered and may proceed to the next stage of the process which is to lodge an appeal with an appropriate body external to Avondale.

- 4 (a) If not satisfied with the decision of the Review Officer in Stage 3, the student may request that the matter be further reviewed by the Council of Private Higher Education (COPHE).
- (b) The Grievance and Appeal process outlined above does not preclude the student seeking redress in other forums outside the Avondale process. For example, the student may wish to take the matter further by selecting the appropriate body from among such bodies as the NSW Fair Trading (Newcastle Centre), Level 5, 400 Hunter St, Newcastle (02-4925-7000), DEEWR (Dept of Education & Workplace Relations) 133-397, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (1-300-656419) or the Anti-Discrimination Board of NSW (02-49264300). (A full list of external bodies is located in the Government section of the local telephone book.) If one of the relevant outside authorities as outlined above gives a directive in relation to a grievance they have reviewed, the relevant outside authority will forward that directive to the President within a reasonable time who will ensure that the directive is acted upon within 14 days.

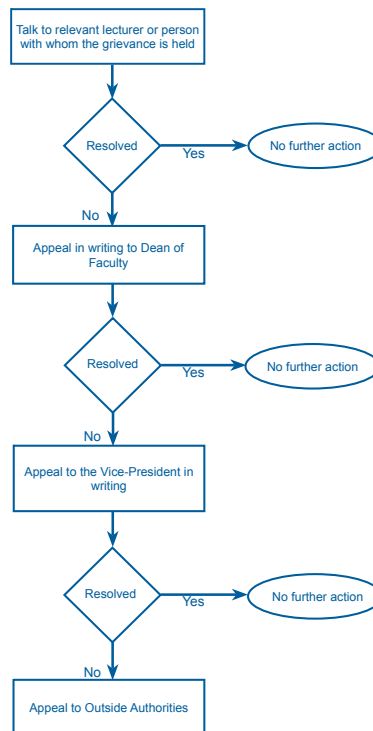
Students should note that:

- The Office of the Vice President (Learning and Teaching) will keep appropriate records of academic grievances for at least five years, and allow parties to the complaint appropriate access to these records.
- The Office of the Vice President (Learning and Teaching) will ensure that all records are treated as confidential.
- All information obtained in the Grievance and Appeals and Review of Decisions processes will be treated confidentially and will also be treated in accordance with the provisions of the Privacy Act 1988.
- In the case of an appeal against a grade the result may be that the final grade is either retained, raised or lowered.
- In a dispute relating to instructions which have been given to students on assessment procedures within a unit, the written guidelines which lecturers have provided to students will be taken as definitive.
- Avondale will alter this policy immediately and without notice where any conflict arises with relevant legislation and in such cases the requirements of the legislation will take precedence.
- Avondale will ensure that students will not be victimized

or discriminated against for submitting a grievance or appeal for consideration and as outlined in this policy.

- At all stages of the process, reasons and a full explanation in writing for decisions and actions taken as part of the procedures will be given if requested by the complainant or respondent.
- At all stages of the process, the complainant and/or respondent may be accompanied and assisted by a third party if desired.
- Avondale will respond to grievances within the time periods indicated.
- Avondale will notify incoming students of the location of this policy on the Avondale website.
- Avondale will induct incoming staff in the location of this policy and in its correct use.
- A person seeking to appeal a decision or action taken regarding a student, financial or academic matter must apply to the relevant responsible officer within 12 months of the decision or action. Avondale may waive the 12 month deadline in special circumstances or if it is satisfied that the application could not be made within this time limit.

The following flow chart summarises the student grievance and appeals process for academic matters:



Note: The full version of this policy is located on the Avondale website and includes processes for resolving grievances and appeals on non-academic matters and processes for prospective students.

Appointment of Examiners

The Examining Committee varies depending on the level of the course. The Research Committee will appoint examiners who are authoritative in the field and whose assessment will be respected: this is to the advantage of both the candidate and Avondale.

Examiners

- Minor thesis (Masters coursework degree)—two examiners, both internal
- Major thesis (Masters coursework degree)—two examiners, one internal, one external
- Masters Research degree—two examiners, both external

Only supervisors may nominate the names of suitable persons as potential examiners, or persons who should not be appointed as examiners. Such nominations must be submitted in writing to the Research Committee, and be supported by adequate reasons. Supervisor's nominations will be taken into consideration in appointment of the examiners.

Examiners' reports

Each examiner will submit a written evaluation of the thesis to the chairperson of the examining committee. In the case of a major thesis in a Masters by coursework degree or a

research only degree, the examiners will recommend one of the following outcomes:

- 1 Accept without conditions
- 2 Accept subject to modification within a specified time frame
- 3 Major revisions required; resubmit for re-examination
- 4 Fail

Revisions to a thesis range from minor to major rewriting. The supervisor's responsibility in the event of any rewrite is to determine the extent of revision required and to assist the candidate to focus revision on such key areas as identified by the examiners. If the original supervisor is no longer available, the Faculty must appoint a replacement supervisor. When revision is completed the supervisor should submit an appropriate report to the Chairperson of the Research Committee. If the Chairperson of the Research Committee is unable to resolve disagreements between the examiners with respect to recommended outcome, the Research Committee shall consider the reports and give a ruling. If necessary, this committee may request a third suitable examiner to assess the thesis.

The submission of a supervisor's report when reports have been received from examiners

The Chair of the Research Committee receives the reports and conveys the results to the Faculty Dean who will convey the results to the supervisor and student.

Assessment Policy (Postgraduate)

Assessment tasks are set in each unit to promote learning and to provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned. Academic staff also are able to demonstrate that students who apply to graduate have fulfilled the requirements of their course, met the requirements of accrediting bodies, Avondale College's Quality Management System and the requirements for professional registration where necessary.

Assessment tasks allow academic staff to monitor students' progress and/or diagnose and remediate learning difficulties and/or deficiencies. Assessment tasks may be modified to allow students with disabilities to demonstrate that they have achieved the learning outcomes through alternate means. Assessment tasks also provide feedback to academic staff on the effectiveness of their instructional methods, and adequacy of the content selected.

Assessment tasks may take a variety of forms such as examinations, portfolios, case studies, critical incident scenarios, group presentations, problem-based learning tasks and may increase in the level of difficulty as the course progresses. In designing assessment tasks academic staff encourage students to demonstrate:

- mastery of the body of knowledge identified in the unit outline;
- understanding of the key concepts of the unit;

- ability to deduce, infer, analyse, synthesize and evaluate;
- ability to apply theories and methodological content of the discipline;
- ability to evaluate content and/or concepts as a basis for professional decision making;
- a capacity for independent thought;
- ability to develop new ideas based on sound scholarship;
- ability to select, use and document the source of their ideas; and
- capacity to argue and communicate coherently and persuasively either symbolically or in written form.

The types and amount of assessment normally undertaken by students at Avondale are included in the assessment policy located on the Avondale website. In summary, key principles include that assessment in each unit normally:

- requires students to apply the knowledge that they have learned to problems that graduates of the course may encounter in the workplace;
- measures whether or not the intended learning outcomes stated in the unit outlines and the content covered in the course have been achieved;
- is completed, with other unit requirements, within the allocated time of 170 hours for each standard unit.

Further details on the types and amount of assessment appear in the current version of the Types and Amount of Assessment Policy located on the Avondale website.

Assessment process

Unit outlines provided to coursework masters students at the commencement of each teaching period include a description of the assessment tasks, their relative weighting, assessment topics, and a list of criteria by which the item(s) will be evaluated.

An overview of all assessment items required to be submitted by students enrolled in the course each teaching period is compiled by the Course Convenor to ensure that the workload of the course is manageable and spread equitably throughout the teaching period. A copy of this overview is made available for students.

In marking the assessment tasks, Avondale academic staff use both norm-referenced and criterion-referenced assessment methods depending on the constraints of each unit. When using both methods of assessment academic staff apply the stated criteria consistently so that students with the same level of achievement receive identical grades. Comments written on the assignments provide feedback to students that is:

- timely (that is, marked assignments are returned to students in less than two weeks after submission);
- informative so that comments provided to students relate to the criteria established at the commencement of the teaching period.

Grades awarded

At the conclusion of a teaching period, academic staff may award any of the following grades. Students are expected to

achieve grades of Pass or better for units to be counted towards an award although up to two units at Pass Terminating (PT) level may be counted.

- **High Distinction (HD)** normally indicating achievement in the range of 85–100%
- **Distinction (D)** normally indicating achievement in the range of 75–84%
- **Credit (C)** normally indicating achievement in the range of 65–74%
- **Pass (P)** normally indicating achievement in the range of 50–64%
- **Pass Terminating (PT)** normally indicating achievement in the range of 45–49%. PTs indicate that the unit may not be used as a pre-requisite for a unit at a more advanced level.
- **Fail, supplementary available (FS)** is reserved for students who have passed other items of assessment and may pass the unit if they achieve a higher examination score by completing extra assignment work, practical work, and/or an examination.
- **Pass with supplementary assessment (SP)** indicates that the student achieved a passing grade after completing an additional assessment. Supplementary assessments normally are awarded where a student failed a unit because an essential assessment component for the unit has not met the minimum requirement but the aggregate score for the assessment is greater than or equal to 50%, or where a student has a mark that falls in the range of 45%–49%. Supplementary assessments may include assignment work, practical work and/or an examination. Supplementary assessments are to be submitted by the end of the first week of the teaching period following that in which the unit was studied unless otherwise determined by the Faculty Examination Board. If the supplementary assessment is not completed by the specified date which must be no later than the census date of the following teaching period, the FS grade will convert to an FF. The lecturer in charge of the unit is responsible for notifying the student of the work to be completed, and also for notifying the Academic Registrar when the work has been received, marked and a final grade for the unit is available.
- **Fail after supplementary assessment attempted (FF)** indicates that the student achieved a failing grade after completing additional assessment.
- **Fail (F)** normally in the range 0–49% however, a failing grade may be awarded in any unit where minimum requirements in essential components have not been met.
- **Withdrawal without penalty (W)** indicates that the student was permitted to withdraw from the unit without academic or financial penalties.
- **Fail due to late withdrawal (FW)** from the unit and financial and academic penalties imposed.
- **Incomplete (IC)** indicates that the unit is incomplete due to assessment item not being received. When the student has not completed the required work, has

requested an extension and the lecturer believes that the student experienced circumstances beyond his/her control, the lecturer in charge of the unit may award an IC. The lecturer in charge of the unit must stipulate the revised due date; must notify the student of the work to be completed, and the due date for its completion. The lecturer in charge must notify the Academic Office when the work has been submitted, marked and of the final grade for the unit before the census date for the next teaching period.

- **Deferred examination (DE)** indicates that the student is required to successfully complete a deferred examination in the unit before the unit is counted towards the course of study. Students who, by reason of extenuating circumstances such as sickness or accident, are unfit to sit a scheduled examination or to make adequate preparation may apply to the Academic Registrar for a deferred examination. Such application must be made on the prescribed form countersigned by a medical practitioner (where illness is the ground for the application). The application form must be submitted to the Academic Registrar as soon as it can be completed. (The expectation is that this will normally be completed within 24 hours). Where sudden illness, accident or other serious misadventure occurs during the examination which prevents the student from continuing with the examination, it is the duty of the student to bring such problem immediately to the attention of the chief examination supervisor who shall report to the Academic Registrar. If an application for a deferred examination arises from such a situation, it should be lodged as soon as is reasonably possible with the Academic Office, and is to be supported by relevant documentation. Students who misread the examination timetable will not be granted permission to sit a deferred examination.
- **Satisfactory (S)** indicates satisfactory achievement in a unit in which the full-range of grades was not available.
- **Unsatisfactory (U)** indicates unsatisfactory achievement in a unit for which the full range of grades was not available.
- **Audit (AU)** indicates attendance at classes but the student was not enrolled in the unit and did not complete assessment tasks.

Norm-referenced assessment

In a norm-referenced procedure, the distribution of scores gained from marking student scripts is a relative rather than absolute measure of quality. Students are measured in relation to the achievement of their peers. Small class sizes make this type of assessment problematic. However, if this type of assessment is used at Avondale in some large classes utilising more than one lecturer and/or tutor it may be appropriate to rescale scores in order to approach a level of parity between the markers and student groups. Where class size indicates that rescaling is appropriate, lecturers may standardise marks using a standard score such as the Z-score.

Criterion-referenced assessment

A criterion-referenced assessment compares the students' performance with a set of standards that are provided to students. Feedback given to students by lecturers using criterion-referenced assessment provides information to students regarding the level of their achievement in relation to their own established goals and helps to focus learning on the intended learning outcomes. Final grades are an expression of how closely students' work has approximated the intended learning outcomes. Where deficiencies exist students are made aware of the areas of those deficiencies and how to address them, thus making progression to advanced levels possible.

In the case of postgraduate coursework degrees the Faculty Board of Examiners meets at the end of each teaching period to:

- ensure that results are valid and reliable and that assessment tasks have been conducted in accordance with the written regulations provided to students;
- take action to protect the reputation of Avondale and other students in cases where there have been suspected or actual attempts to circumvent assessment requirements;
- identify anomalies in the assessment process;
- identify students who are not maintaining adequate progress in the course and recommend the appropriate action to the Course Convenor, the Faculty Dean, the Vice-President (Learning and Teaching) or the Vice-President (Administration and Research).

In the case of postgraduate research degrees the Avondale Research Committee meets twice per year to identify students who are making satisfactory progress.

Course Assurance

For each course of study offered at Avondale, Avondale is required to have a legally-binding agreement with one or more higher education providers (the "Second Provider"), that should Avondale cease to be able to provide a course of study, the Second Provider will offer to enrol Avondale students in that course of study in a similar course, with full credit for the units of study completed and leading to the same or a comparable qualification. (Guidelines to the Higher Education Support Act 2003).

In the event that the course assurance arrangements were needed, the Second Provider might have a different student contribution or tuition fee for the course of study, so that the amount students may be required to pay may vary.

Students are not obliged to enrol in the alternative course offered under the course assurance arrangement, but if they enrolled with a third provider there is no obligation for that provider to offer full credit transfer for the units of study completed at Avondale.

Fee Assurance

For each course of study offered at Avondale, Avondale is also required to have a legally-binding guarantee provided by a separate legal entity, under which the separate legal entity guarantees to refund to the student the student contribution amount or tuition fee received by Avondale for any uncompleted units of study where:

- i Avondale ceases to be able to provide a course of study; and
- ii Avondale has not transferred to another provider with whom the student has enrolled, the student's student contribution amount or tuition fee;
- iii The Seventh-day Adventist Church (SPD) Limited has provided this guarantee for students at Avondale.

In the event that Avondale was unable to continue to offer a course of study in which students are enrolled, a student in that course would either receive a refund of the student contribution or tuition fee paid for any incomplete units of study, or the funds paid for such incomplete units of study would be transferred (with the student's agreement) to the other provider with whom the student has enrolled.

In such circumstances any refund claim should be directed initially to the Student Finance Office of Avondale, and, if Avondale is unable to provide a refund, to the Treasurer of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (SPD) Limited. Refund claims should be supported by evidence of enrolment in the unit(s) of study not delivered to completion, and evidence of the student contribution or tuition fee paid for the incomplete unit(s).

This Course Assurance Statement is published in full on the Avondale website: www.avondale.edu.au

Glossary of Academic Terms

Academic advisement

Each student is responsible for structuring his/her academic program in accordance with published requirements. Course Convenors are available to advise and assist students in arranging their academic program where necessary.

Academic regalia

Candidates for graduation are required to wear the specified academic regalia during graduation ceremonies, as determined by Avondale administration.

Academic year

The academic year at Avondale comprises two teaching periods of 13 week's duration. In addition, a year-long teaching period (March-November) includes residential schools for some postgraduate units. Two intensive (three week) teaching periods are offered in February, June and December. The census dates for each unit are listed on the Avondale website and in this glossary under Census Dates.

Academic transcripts

Academic transcripts are the permanent academic record of each student and includes a list of all units in which the student has enrolled together with the grade awarded. Two free copies of the transcript are normally provided to each graduate following graduation. Further copies are available on request, and will be provided following payment of the standard charge. Official transcripts bear the impressed seal of Avondale.

Appeals

Students may appeal against any administrative decision if appropriate grounds for an appeal exist. Non-frivolous appeals will be considered under the relevant guidelines such as the Grievance and Appeals policy or Anti-bullying and Harassment policy, or Postgraduate Student Handbook.

Auditing units

Auditing a unit involves attending class periods without doing assignments or taking tests or examinations. No academic credit is given for an audited unit. Students may audit classes provided the prerequisites have been fulfilled; the lecturer and Head of School have approved the audit arrangements; the unit is not a practical unit; and the student is enrolled in at least one unit in the current teaching period. Students auditing units may change to credit status if the Course Convenor approves, provided all assessment requirements have been or will be met. A student changing to credit status will be charged the full fee for the unit.

Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement

The Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement is provided by Australian higher education institutions to graduating students on completion of the requirements for a particular higher education award. It provides a description of the nature, level, context and status of studies that were pursued by the individual named. Its purpose is to assist in both national and international recognition of Australian qualifications and to promote international mobility and professional recognition of graduates.

Census dates

Census dates are the dates on which Avondale reports enrolments to the Commonwealth Government. Students are not permitted to add or drop or change enrolment without academic and/or financial penalty after the census date in each particular semester or teaching period. Census dates are recorded on the Academic Calendar.

Core units

Core units are certain required or mandatory units that form part of a degree. All students are required to undertake core units where designated as part of their degree.

Course

The total program of study leading to an academic award.

Credit points

In most courses the academic weighting of each unit is indicated by the number of credit points awarded to it. In postgraduate courses an equivalent full-time load is generally expected to be four 6-credit point units totalling 24 credit points per semester. Research higher degrees contain aggregated credit points for thesis units.

Degree regulations

All degrees are governed by degree regulations which are published on the Avondale website. Follow the links to Policies and the Handbook.

Disciplinary action

Students should note that the Code of Conduct identifies the behaviours expected of students. The Code of Discipline provides guidelines for responding to breaches of the Code of Conduct. If any student is suspended from Avondale, he/she will be required to make a written request to Avondale Administration before reinstatement as a student.

Effective Full-time Student Load (EFTSL)

One EFTSL is the standard study load for one year of a course of study. The standard full-time load in most postgraduate coursework masters degrees at Avondale is four 6-credit point units per semester or eight units per year. All 6-credit point units comprise 0.125 of a full-time load.

Elective

A unit which a student may choose within the elective parameters specified in the relevant course regulations.

Full-time student

Students enrolled in a normal full-time student load at Avondale normally undertake four units each major teaching period. Eight units per annum is considered to be a normal full-time load. A full-time student is registered for at least seventy-five per cent of a full student load or at least three units totalling 18 credit points in each teaching period of the academic year.

Graduation

Students are permitted to graduate from their course of study when they have fulfilled the requirements prescribed for their course, have achieved a passing grade for each unit listed for that course in the Handbook for the year that they entered the course or a later Handbook, and fully paid all outstanding fees.

Graduating class

Candidates for graduation join the graduating class in the year of their expected graduation. Unsatisfactory citizenship may result in suspension from the class.

Graduation in absentia

Graduates unable to attend the official graduation ceremony may graduate in absentia. Notification must be provided to the Academic Registrar in writing prior to the graduation ceremony of the intention.

Higher Education Provider (HEP)

Avondale has been gazetted as a private Higher Education Provider under the Higher Education Support Act 2003.

Independent topic

Up to 12 credit points of academic credit at 200-Level or above may be undertaken as an independent topic under the supervision of a lecturer. Independent topic units require students to produce written reports of their study. Independent topic units are available provided that: students have not undertaken a research seminar in their course; the Independent Topic is not replacing a required unit; students have attained an average grade of at least credit level (minimum of 65%); and the approval of the Course Convenor is obtained.

Intermission

Any student enrolled in a course of study at Avondale may apply for Intermission (Leave of Absence) from his/her course for up to two years by completing the prescribed form. If such leave is approved, the student is entitled to re-commence his/her course at any point in the two-year period. Unless prior arrangements are made outlining how the original requirements of the student's course are to be completed, the student may be required to resume studies under the handbook regulations existing at the time of re-enrolment. Students who do not return to their course of study after two years on intermission will be administratively discontinued from their course of study by the Academic Registrar. The time taken as intermission is included when calculating the maximum time allowed to complete a course.

Last day to enter a unit

Students are expected to be present for the instruction and orientation available in the initial class sessions of each semester and/or teaching period. Where a student wishes to change a unit, a student may enter a unit up until the ninth academic day of a 14 week teaching period (or pro rata point in a teaching period of a different length), provided the lecturers believe the student's capacity to succeed in the unit will not be compromised by such a late entry. Entering a class after the first day of the teaching period requires approval by the Course Convenor.

Last day to withdraw from a unit

Students withdrawing from a unit prior to the census date must obtain the approval of the Course Convenor. Where this is approved prior to the census date, the student's academic record will indicate Withdrawn (W). Withdrawals after census date will result in a Withdrawal Late Without

Academic Penalty (WL) or Fail due to Late Withdrawal (FW). A student is still liable for the full tuition fee where withdrawal from a unit occurs after the census date of the teaching period in which he/she is enrolled.

Provisional enrolment

Students who do not meet the entry requirements for a particular course of study and have been admitted to a course on a provisional basis need to work toward full status as soon as is practicable.

Special cases

All requests for special consideration are referred to the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee in the case of postgraduate coursework degrees, or by the Faculty Research Committee in the case of postgraduate research higher degrees.

Teaching periods

Teaching periods are the length of time over which units of study are offered. Avondale's teaching periods include 13 week semesters, 3 week intensives and year long. Postgraduate research students may commence and/or complete their course at any time. See the overview of teaching period commencement dates, conclusion dates, and census dates on the Avondale website, www.avondale.edu.au.

Testamur

A certificate issued at the completion of a course of study that indicates the student has fulfilled all the requirements prescribed for that course of study.

Unit

A self-contained unit of study normally equivalent to 0.125 EFTSL (previously termed 'subject').

Unit area

A field of study generally synonymous with a single academic discipline (e.g., Theology, Education, Accounting).

Unit availability

Some units listed in the Handbook are not offered every year. Units availability in the current year are listed on the Avondale website. In addition, Avondale reserves the right not to offer a unit should there be insufficient numbers of students enrolling in that unit, or non-availability of staff.

Unit codes

Unit codes at Avondale indicate the discipline area and the year level of the unit. The first four letters indicate the discipline area (e.g., EDUC indicates Education). The first digit indicates the year level, for example:

- 0 indicates pre-degree
- 1 indicates 100-level in an undergraduate degree
- 2 indicates 200-level in an undergraduate degree
- 3 indicates 300-level in an undergraduate degree

- 4 indicates Honours level in an undergraduate degree, or a graduate entry course
- 5 indicates a coursework masters degree
- 6 indicates a research masters degree
- 7 indicates a doctoral degree

The final four digits indicate the unit sequence in the course.

Units failed twice

A student who fails a unit twice is not permitted to re-enrol in that unit or an equivalent unless there are exceptional circumstances as determined by the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee. A student who fails a unit twice in a core unit for a course will be asked to show cause in writing to the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee why they should not be excluded from that course.

Australian government visa regulations do not permit international students on student visas to repeat a failed unit more than once.

Unit workload

Part-time postgraduate students normally enrol in two 6-credit-point units each semester and each unit requires approximately 170 hours of time commitment to complete. The weekly time commitment for one unit is approximately 12 hours.

Verification of credentials and qualifications

Applicants who apply to undertake a course of study at Avondale must submit documentary evidence that they hold the qualification(s) required for entry to that course. An original or certified copy of the required qualification, or an official letter provided by the issuing institution confirming that the degree has been conferred, must be sighted.

An individual who has falsified qualifications, identity, other documentation or information used to assess entry to a course of study or entry to the country will be investigated, reported to authorities, and a range of penalties applied. The full version of this policy is located on the Avondale website, www.avondale.edu.au.

Withdrawal from a course

Students discontinuing their course part way through a teaching period must complete the official withdrawal form. Fee refunds for withdrawals prior to census dates are calculated from the date of completion of this form. A student who fails to comply with these formalities forfeits fee refunds and is awarded a failure for each enrolled unit.

International Students - special regulations

Where International students are enrolled at Avondale, the following additional special regulations apply prior to, during and following their period of enrolment.

ESOS Framework

The Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000 and associated legislation is the legal framework governing the responsibility of education institutions towards overseas students. Avondale applies this framework in the development of its policies and procedures related to international students.

This framework comprises:

- ESOS Act 2000 (as amended in 2007)
- ESOS Regulations 2001
- The National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students (National Code 2007)
- ESOS (Registration Charges) Act 1997
- ESOS Assurance Fund Act

For more information about the ESOS framework, please visit: <http://aei.dest.gov.au/aei/esos/default.htm>

Student visas

International students planning to study in Australia need a passport and an Australian student visa. Visa conditions vary from country to country—see the DIAC (Department of Immigration and Citizenship) website: <http://www.immi.gov.au/students/index.htm> for details. Applicants from many countries must provide evidence of English language competence. The IELTS test is the preferred English language assessment test for student visa applications. Avondale's Enquiry and Enrolment Centre can assist with information and guidance on visa matters.

Academic load

International students must have an enrolment load which will allow them to complete their course within the duration specified in the Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) issued with their visa. This is monitored by the Avondale International Students Officer. Student visa holders in undergraduate courses are normally expected to be enrolled in a full-time study load (24 credit points) per teaching period or equivalent teaching period. Enrolment in less than this load may be approved by the Academic Registrar if:

- there are compassionate or compelling reasons for reducing the load;
- the reduced load is part of Avondale's intervention strategy;
- the student has studied, or plans to study, extra units in another teaching period because of unit offerings;
- the student has only a few units left to complete and these do not constitute a full-time load;

- pre-requisite units are not available in that teaching period.

Avondale expects students to enrol in the Christian Studies units prescribed for their course. This requirement may be waived where a student has already completed similar units at another Seventh-day Adventist higher education institution.

Study by distance education

In line with visa regulations, students at Avondale who are student visa holders must not be enrolled exclusively in distance education units in any one semester or year-long teaching period, and may not complete more than 25% of their course by distance education. This is monitored by the Avondale International Students Officer.

Academic performance

International students must meet course progress requirements as outlined in the Avondale 'Progression Policy and Rules [A.30]'. Avondale is required to inform DIAC if a student visa holder is in breach of course progress requirements.

Attendance at classes

The Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000 requires all overseas students to attend classes, in line with the institution's attendance policy, during the period of their study. Avondale is required to report student visa holders to the Secretary of the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), through the Provider and International Students Management System (PRISMS), if they are in breach of attendance requirements.

The following statement is incorporated in all student information documents accompanying unit outlines:

International students admitted to Australia on student visas should be aware that Avondale is required to notify the Secretary of the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), through the Provider and International Students Management System (PRISMS), breaches of the attendance policy or of unsatisfactory academic progression.

Overseas health insurance cover

All student visa holders are required to have Australian Overseas Student Health Cover. Evidence of current cover must be produced before the beginning of each teaching period as a condition for continuing enrolment at Avondale.

Change of course or course duration

Avondale is required to inform DIAC, through PRISMS, of any change of course or course duration by an international student. Students wishing to change the course in which they are enrolled at Avondale must submit a 'Change of Course' form to the Academic Office. Student visa conditions require the written approval of Avondale to change from one course to another.

If a student visa holder finishes a course prior to the scheduled completion date, he/she must either enrol with another

institution within 28 days, or obtain a different visa, or leave Australia.

If it is determined that a student visa holder is not going to complete the course within the expected duration as identified on the COE issued with the student visa, depending on the circumstances Avondale will:

- encourage the student to 'catch up' by taking extra units if allowed under the Student Workload overload rules;
- take steps to issue a new COE for the student; *or*
- if the student has deliberately enrolled in a reduced load, despite the Academic Registrar's advice to the contrary;
- cancel the student's enrolment when the student refuses to enrol in an appropriate load; *or*
- document the student's behaviour and, if the student requests an extension of duration of study, refuse to extend the COE.

International students may apply in writing to the Academic Registrar for deferment or suspension of their studies if they have good reason for doing so (compassionate or compelling circumstances). A record of the application and determined outcome will be kept in the student's file.

Avondale will only extend the duration of an international student's study program where it is clear that the student will not complete the course within the expected duration, as specified on the COE issued with the student visa, as a result of:

- compassionate or compelling circumstances (for example, illness where a medical certificate states that the student is unable to attend classes in line with the 'Attendance Policy [A.21]', or Avondale was unable to offer a pre-requisite unit);
- Avondale implementing its intervention strategy for the student because he/she is at risk of not meeting satisfactory course progress in line with the 'Progression Policy and Rules [A.30]'; *or*
- an approved deferment or suspension of study having been granted.

Where an international student's course duration is shortened due to granted advanced standing or credit transfer, Avondale will:

- if the advanced standing or credit transfer is granted before the student visa grant, indicate the actual net course duration in the COE issued for that student for that course; *or*
- if the advanced standing or credit transfer is granted after the student visa grant, report the change of course duration to DIAC via PRISMS.

Transfer between registered providers

International students may transfer to another registered provider, provided they have completed at least six months of the course in which they are enrolled at Avondale. A letter of release will be granted at no cost to the student.

International students may request, in writing, to transfer from Avondale to another registered provider before they have completed six months of the course in which they are enrolled. Requests for transfer in these circumstances will be assessed by the Academic Registrar, and will be granted within 10 working days of the request being submitted, where:

- the student has a valid enrolment offer from the receiving provider; *and*
- the student, if under 18, has provided written evidence that the student's parent/legal guardian supports the transfer, and, where appropriate, written confirmation that the new provider will accept responsibility for approving a student's accommodation, support and general welfare arrangements; *and*
- the course the student wishes to transfer to better meets his/her study capability and long term goals; or the student provides evidence that his/her reasonable expectations about the current course are not being met.

Students who are granted permission to transfer to another provider before completing six months in their course at Avondale will be provided with a letter of release at no cost. The letter will advise the student of the need to contact DIAC to seek advice on whether a new student visa is required.

A request for transfer to another provider will not be granted where it is considered the transfer may be detrimental to the student because:

- the transfer may jeopardise the student's progression through a package of courses; *or*
- the student only recently commenced study in the course and the full range of support services are yet to be provided; *or*
- the student is trying to avoid being reported to DIAC for failure to meet the provider's attendance or academic progress requirements.

Where a request for transfer is not granted the Academic Registrar will provide the student with a letter outlining the reason/reasons for the request being refused and providing information about his/her right to appeal the decision by using the Avondale Student Grievance and Appeals Policy.

Avondale will not knowingly enrol a student wishing to transfer from another registered provider prior to the student completing six months of his/her course at the other provider, except where:

- either the other provider or the course in which the student is enrolled cease to be registered; *or*
- the other provider has provided a written letter of release; *or*
- the other provider has had a sanction imposed on its registration by the government that prevents the student continuing in his/her course; *or*
- any government sponsor of the student considers the change to be in the student's best interest and has provided written support for the change.

Avondale will maintain records of all requests from students for a letter of release. The assessment of, and decision regarding, a request will be kept in the student's file

Change of address

Student visa holders must change their contact details in Student Connect within seven days of any change in their address or telephone number. If an international student fails to satisfy course requirements relating to attendance or satisfactory academic performance, the Academic Office is required to notify the student of this. If the student's address is not up to date and the student does not receive this notice, automatic visa cancellation could occur without the student's knowledge. Such cancellation may not be revoked if it has occurred because the student failed to keep Avondale informed of his/her address and other contact details.

Renewal of student visas

Student visas should be renewed at least four weeks before the current visa expires. Failure to renew before the current visa expires may result in deportation.

Living Costs

Information about living costs in Australia can be found at: http://www.avondale.edu.au/future_students::International_Students/

Research Ethics

Avondale is committed to providing for the ethical review of research projects and other studies which involve certain interventions with humans as participants. Such interventions could range from simple questionnaires, observations, case notes and clinical procedures through to various forms of psychological or physically invasive tests.

Investigators should seek clarification from the *Human Research Ethics Committee* (HREC) if they have any doubts about the ethical nature of their investigations.

Applicants must comply with the National Health and Medical Research Council (2007), *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*. Investigators submit an application for ethical clearance prior to engaging in their research project to The Secretary, Avondale Human Research Ethics Committee. The application should be completed on the electronic form located on the Avondale website.

The HREC functions to assess, and where approved, provide clearance for proposed research studies to be undertaken by Avondale staff or Avondale research students that involve individuals, human materials or records from which participants in the study may be identified. Also projects of non-affiliated researchers who plan to use Avondale staff or students as participants in their study will be assessed.

Meetings are normally scheduled six times in the year.

Applications must be submitted by the due date, as published on the Avondale website, to allow the HREC 5 working days to evaluate the application.

The *Animal Research Ethics* function is administered under an auspiced arrangement with the University of Newcastle. An Avondale representative liaises with the Animal Research Officer at the University of Newcastle. The University of Newcastle is responsible for official documentation and approval of research projects at Avondale involving animals as per the *Agreement regarding the use of the University of Newcastle Animal Care and Ethics Committee*.